

Magnetic Resonance Imaging or M.R.I.

What is and MRI?

MRI or Magnetic Resonance Imaging is a patient examination that uses radio waves and magnetic fields aided by a computer rather than x-rays to produce images. The MRI exam is painless and extremely safe because no radiation is used. The MRI is able to produce images of bone and soft tissue in great detail while eliminating overlying structures that would otherwise hide image details that need to be studied.

What will the MRI be like?

A MRI technologist will greet you and go over a pre exam questionnaire. Many people can undergo a MRI exam without any problems but some cannot.

The technologist will ask you questions like:

- Do you weigh more than 450 pounds?
- Can you lie flat for 30 to 60 minutes?
- Are you claustrophobic?
- Are you pregnant?
- Do you have a cardiac pacemaker, a neurostimulator, a hearing aid or any sort of implant device?
- Have you ever been injured by metal, which still may be lodged, in your body or any metal fragments in your eyes?

The radiologist and the technologist are expecting questions from you. Feel free to ask any questions you may have regarding your MRI.

Following the question period you will be asked to lie down on a comfortable padded table. At times a special receiver will be placed next to the area that is to be scanned.

It is normal for the MRI to make banging and tapping noises for a few minutes (like a washing machine out of balance) as the technologists adjust the controls of the scanner.

During the exam the scan table you are lying on will be slid into a long narrow tunnel which houses the magnet. You will be able to speak to the people conducting the exam via an intercom. Remember the exam is completely painless and you should try to relax the 45 to 60 minutes you are in the magnet.

You may be given a contrast media or dye to highlight a particular body part. This dye is injected into a vein and is eliminated from your body in about one day.

How long will the MRI take?

The average time for a MRI exam is 30 to 60 minutes depending on how many different areas of the body are to be studied.

How will I learn the results?

The Radiologist (a physician who specializes in reading x-rays and MRI) will study your exam and provide a written report to your doctor. Your doctor will contact you and discuss the final results of the report with you.